

# HOW TO BABY TO SLEEP FAST

If you've recently had a baby, you won't need me to tell you how exhausting the first few months can be. This is an incredibly difficult and tiring time and tends to get worse until about 12 weeks have passed. At 12 weeks, your baby will start to establish his or her own circadian rhythms. In practical terms, this means that your baby will start to consolidate more of his or her sleep at night and will start to sleep for longer stretches at a time.

I can remember vividly how these first few months can feel. You can't ever seem to shake off your tiredness and every time you start drifting off, your baby starts crying and requires your attention. You are probably wondering if you will ever get a decent night's sleep and when (if ever) your baby will "sleep through the night".

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With this in mind I have put together some tips that will help you through these early days. I can't promise that you won't feel tired any more, but if you follow these tips, you will be better equipped to make the most of your situation.

## Sleep Tips

- If you can breastfeed, do. There is evidence to show that breastfed babies sleep about 45 minutes
- longer on average than babies that are raised on formula.
- If you can, sleep near to or co-sleep with your baby in the early weeks. It is important to make sure that you follow sensible safety precautions, but again there is evidence to show that babies sleep longer when in proximity to their mothers.
- Sleep when your baby sleeps. This one may sound obvious but you would be surprised how many mothers ignore it. I know that there are many household chores that you have been neglecting but it is more important for you to get some sleep when you can. Even resting with your eyes closed can have strong recuperative effects.
- During the daylight hours, try and expose your baby to as much natural sunlight as possible. Conversely, you should try to keep artificial lighting low at night. This will help your baby to set her body clock more quickly.
- Once your milk supply (if you are breastfeeding) is established and you are confident in your breastfeeding, you may wish to express some milk so that your partner or other family member can feed your baby while you sleep. If you are already bottle feeding then the same applies.

- Don't worry about waking up your baby if you suspect that he or she has a wet nappy. Modern nappies can easily cope with a few hours of urine and your little one will soon let you know if he or she is uncomfortable.

There is one other point that I would like to mention. If you don't get enough sleep, you are putting yourself at greater risk of illness and postpartum depression. This isn't good for you or for your baby. On a brighter note, I know it may seem like you haven't slept since forever, but things WILL get better soon.

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